



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Results of Health Insurance Study Available ***North Dakota's Uninsured Rate Is Lower than the National Rate***

BISMARCK, N.D. – The results of a February 2004 health insurance survey indicate that about 8.2 percent of North Dakotans are uninsured, according to Dr. John Baird, field medical officer for the North Dakota Department of Health. That compares with the national rate of 15.2 percent and the rates for Minnesota (7.9 percent), South Dakota (11.5 percent) and Montana (15.3 percent). In a 1994 study, the North Dakota uninsured rate was 9.9 percent.

The confidential telephone survey asked about 3,200 North Dakotans about health insurance issues, including adequacy of insurance coverage and barriers to obtaining insurance. The results of the survey will help the Department of Health and the Governor's Health Insurance Advisory Committee explore ways to improve access to health insurance for individuals, families and employers within the state.

"The good news is that more North Dakotans have health insurance today than in years past," Baird said. "Although North Dakota's uninsured rate is lower than that for the nation and most surrounding states, we still have citizens without insurance. That means we need to continue to work for access to affordable health coverage."

The survey was conducted on behalf of the Department of Health by the Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Other survey results include:

- About 59 percent of the uninsured are younger than 35.
- About 70 percent of the uninsured are employed; of those, about one-half are either self-employed or work for businesses with 10 or fewer employees.

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- Native Americans (32 percent) are more likely to be uninsured than are whites (7 percent). About 60 percent of uninsured Native Americans have access to health care through the Indian Health Service.
- The uninsured are more likely to describe their health as fair or poor; in addition, they are less confident they could receive health care when they need it.

For more information about the study, contact Dr. John Baird at 701.328.2372 or by e-mail at jbaird@state.nd.us. To provide input about their health insurance status, the public may e-mail spg@state.nd.us or call 701.328.2372.

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Please note: A PowerPoint presentation detailing results of the survey is available on the North Dakota Department of Health website at www.ndhealth.gov (click on "Publications").

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